So, I would like to call upon the Central Government, the Home Ministry, to take up the matter immediately. It needs intervention of the Home Ministry immediately before the matter goes out of hand. Thank you.

DR. B.B. DUTTA (Nominated): Mr. Chairman, Sir, what Mr. Nongtdu has said is hundred per cent correct. In fact, we have raised this issue earlier also. Over the years there has been a steady detrioration in the law and order situation; and insurgent groups from other areas have gradually expanded up to Meghalaya. In fact, they have made Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya, the Greater Shillong as their bases: They have been operating with all the intruders. I would like to say one thing, when the United Front Government was in power, the hon. Home Minister, at that time, refused to accept the position that Meghalaya was having insurgency problem. I do not know what the definition of 'insurgency' is. But we have had the same problem. Now this problem has further worsened. I want to know from the present Home Minister, the Home Ministry what view they have taken on the situation in Meghalaya, particular in Shillong and in Greater Shillong. It has become a meeting place for all the insurgent groups operating in the North-East. They come and operate here. A lot of people have been armed with weapons in Meghalaya. They don't use them quickly. They use them according to their strategy. They commit one killing to extort money. If people refuse to give money, then, they commit another killing. They commit some kidnappings. Not only the non-Tribals are affected but the tribals themselves who have families, the contractors, the businessmen are affected. I am glad that Mr. Nongtdu who had been a Home Minister in the State of Meghalaya and who had been a Minister in other departments also and who is a Member of Parliament from that State has come out with these facts. In view of what the hon. Member has stated, I hope that the Home Ministry will wake up and find out what is going on there and find a soulution. Thank You.

STATEMENT REGARDING ORDINANCE MERCHANT SHIPPING (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE, 1998

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI M. THAMBI DURAI): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a statement (in English and Hindi) explaining the circumstances which had necessitated immediate legislation by the Merchant Shipping (Amendment) Ordinance, 1998.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT-722/98]

THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1998

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI M. THAMBI DURAI): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT-773/98]

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

SHRI M. THAMBI DURAI: Sir, I introduce the Bill.

STATEMENT REGARDING ORDINANCE REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE, 1998

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI M. THAMBI DURAI): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a Statement (in English and Hindi) explaining the circumstances which had necessitated immediate legislation by the Representation of the People (Amedment) Ordinance, 1998.

THE REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1998

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI M. THAMBI DURAI): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

SHRI M. THAMBI DURAI: Sir, I introduce the Bill.